

XVIII. *Notes on an extraordinary race of* *Arctia mendica*,
Linn. By GEORGE T. PORRITT, F.L.S., &c.

[Read July 3rd, 1889.]

PLATE XIV.

It will be remembered that a year ago,—on July 4th, 1888,—I exhibited, at a meeting of this Society, a long and curious series of 25 male and 19 female specimens of *Arctia mendica*, which I had bred from a small batch of eggs found on a dock-leaf. Of this series only about eight (including both sexes) approached the ordinary type of the species. A representative series of these specimens are the subjects of the first eight figures on Plate XIV., and an account of them has appeared at p. 39 of the 'Entomologist's Monthly Magazine' for July, 1888. I failed in an attempt to obtain eggs from any of these specimens; and as it did not occur to me that another attempt from casually found eggs would be likely to produce equally interesting results, I had no thought of further carrying on the experiment. However on June 7th my friend Mr. G. W. K. Crosland made a search for the species, and exactly on the same spot where the previous year's eggs were collected he found two female moths and another small batch of about 50 eggs. One of the moths—which was very strongly marked, much indeed like the most striking of those bred last year—having deposited a large batch of eggs, Mr. Crosland very kindly gave me the little batch he had found on the dock-leaf. From these I reared 47 larvæ, which during the week ending on May 14th last produced 45 moths, of which 22 were males and 23 females; and a more extraordinary series of moths from so small a batch of eggs I never saw. The 10 specimens I have picked out for my cabinet series, including the palest specimen bred as well as the darkest, I exhibit this evening, and they also form the subjects of the ten lower figures on the Plate, which

has been kindly drawn for me by Mr. S. L. Mosley, of Huddersfield, a Fellow of this Society. The males of the 1889 series are, I think, not quite so dark, nor scarcely so strongly marked as those bred in 1888, which in markings correspond with the females exactly; and this is curious, as the females of 1889 are much darker and more strongly marked than those of 1888, as will at once be seen on reference to the Plate. By an unfortunate accident Mr. Crosland lost nearly all the large brood of larvæ from his dark moth. He was keeping them in an empty aquarium in the garden, and one day rain came on during his absence and almost all of them were drowned. He reared only three moths, all males, but they were darker and more strongly marked than mine, so that it is in the highest degree probable that had he been successful with the brood we should have had still more remarkable results.

The locality where this most curious race of *Arctia mendica* occurs is at Grimescar, about a mile north of the town of Huddersfield. It is the only locality where the species is known to occur in the Huddersfield district, and is there confined, so far as we know, to less than a hundred yards of a lane not more than ten or a dozen yards wide. Many years ago I used to get the species lower down in this lane, where it has not been seen of late years; and, as the area of its habitat is becoming, from no apparent cause, more restricted, the moth is evidently becoming at the same time much blacker.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIV.

FIGS. 1' to 8. *Arctia mendica*; two males and six females bred in 1888.

„ 9 „, 18. *A. mendica*; one male and nine females bred in 1889.